DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 415 634 EC 306 116

TITLE	Assistance and Integration: Handicapped Children and Young Persons within the Federal Republic of Germany's Education System.
PUB DATE	1997-03-00
NOTE	29p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Inter Nationes e.V. Kennedyallee 91-03, D-53175 Bonn, Germany; e-mail: bw@inter-nationes.de; World Wide Web: http://www.inter-nationes.de
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
JOURNAL CIT	Bildung und Wissenschaft; n3 1997
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Behavior Disorders; *Disabilities; Early Intervention; *Educational Practices; Educational Trends; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Graduation Requirements; Hearing Impairments; Mental Retardation; Physical Disabilities; *Remedial Instruction; *Special Education; Special Health Problems; Speech Impairments; Visual Impairments; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Germany

ABSTRACT

This journal issue provides a comprehensive review of the remedial school system for students with disabilities in Germany. Introductory material describes the school system as a whole, the rights of children with disabilities within the system, and the existence of significant differences in school laws and services among the 16 German states. Text, photographs, and charts are used to describe services provided to blind pupils, pupils with impaired vision, deaf pupils, pupils with impaired hearing, mentally handicapped pupils, physically handicapped pupils, educationally subnormal pupils, pupils with speech disorders, pupils with behavioral disorders, and ill pupils. Separate sections describe early remedial treatment for young children with disabilities, the awarding of final school certificates at remedial education locations, and vocational training of young persons with disabilities. Also provided in summary form is information on the organizations responsible for remedial schools, school costs, foreign pupils, remedial teacher training, and current trends toward more integration of students with disabilities. The final section provides personal accounts of two individuals, a mentally handicapped 19-year-old who would like to be a cook, and a description of life as an adult blind student. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 415 634

BILDUNG UND B&W WISSENSCHAFT 3 / 1997

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

E

ASSISTANCE AND INTEGRATION

Handicapped children and young persons within the Federal Republic of Germany's education system

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

EC 306116

PREFACE

The Länder (states) in the Federal Republic of Germany enjoy full autonomy in cultural and education matters. This means that there is no nationwide uniform legislation with regard to schools. On the contrary, school laws are approved on an individual basis by the sixteen state legislatures. The right enjoyed by handicapped children and young persons to appropriate education and training is enshrined in the Basic Law and the constitutions of the *Länder*, and set out in detail in current legislation.

CONTENTS

Preface 2
(Bruno Prandl)

The remedial school system in Germany 3
(Bruno Prandl)

Remedial teaching for handicapped children 5

- *Blind pupils*
- *Pupils with impaired vision*
- *Deaf pupils*
- *Pupils with impaired hearing*
- *Mentally handicapped pupils*
- *Physically handicapped pupils*
- *Educationally subnormal pupils*
- *Pupils with speech disorders*
- *Pupils with behavioural disorders*
- *Ill pupils*

Early remedial treatment of handicapped children 16

Final school certificates and remedial education locations 17

Vocational training of handicapped young persons 18

Organizations responsible for remedial schools 21

School costs 21

Foreign pupils 21

Remedial teacher training 22

Development trends 22

Curricula vitae

Resignation is out of the question 24

Life as a blind student 26

Addresses 28

Cover: "Alt Circus", 1980. Watercolour. Otmar Alt, Hamm

Photo: Hildegard Ostermann

Bruno Prandl

To ensure that development within the schools sector takes place as harmoniously as possible, the "Standing Conference of the Education and Cultural Ministers of the *Länder*" has been set up. This body approves and publishes recommendations for all conceivable areas of school education.

Several recommendations of this nature have been approved over the last few decades. The 1972 "Recommendation with Regard to the Organization of the Remedial School System" was basically aimed at expanding existing institutions and the creation of new ones required in the special school system. These recommendations have played a crucial part in the realization of handicapped children's right to education and provided effective support for the expansion of a differentiated remedial school system.

The new recommendations made on 6 May 1994 are aimed at safeguarding the further development of remedial measures for handicapped children and supporting efforts to set up classes in which handicapped and non-handicapped pupils are educated and

B&W 3/97 Page 2

taught jointly, whilst simultaneously taking individual requirements into consideration. Thus the new recommendations address all education institutions for children and young persons, in an attempt to enhance the integrative powers and acceptability of schools for children suffering from disablements.

All children in the Federal Republic of Germany are obliged to attend school after the age of six. Compulsory school attendance lasts 9 to 10 years. On completion of primary school *(Grundschule)*, which lasts 4 or 6 years (depending the state), pupils move onto main school *(Hauptschule)* for 5 or 6 years, intermediate school *(Realschule)* for 6 years or grammar/college preparatory school *(Gymnasium)* for 8 or 9 years. The compulsory 9 or 10 years of school attendance - usually mornings only five days a week - is followed by three years compulsory attendance at a vocational school *(Berufsschule)* in the case of young persons wishing to learn a trade. Vocational schools are part-time institutions which pupils attend once a week only. The remaining four days are devoted to practical on-the-job training.

Compulsory school regulations apply equally to handicapped children. Consequently it has always been the rule that handicapped children and young persons, who are able to follow the educational course at a "normal" school, must be allowed to do so. True, in the past a certain percentage of pupils suffering from various handicaps has always been anticipated and for whom places must be provided at remedial schools. Today, the question as to how many handicapped children must be taken into these special schools catering for their particular disability cannot be answered in general terms. Whatever the case may be, the decision whether a normal or a remedial school will offer the best possible solution is made jointly by all those involved. If, however, handicapped children are not able to follow the education course provided by normal schools, places are available for them at remedial schools of various types. If necessary, the latter also offer all the qualifications obtainable at normal schools.

THE REMEDIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM IN GERMANY

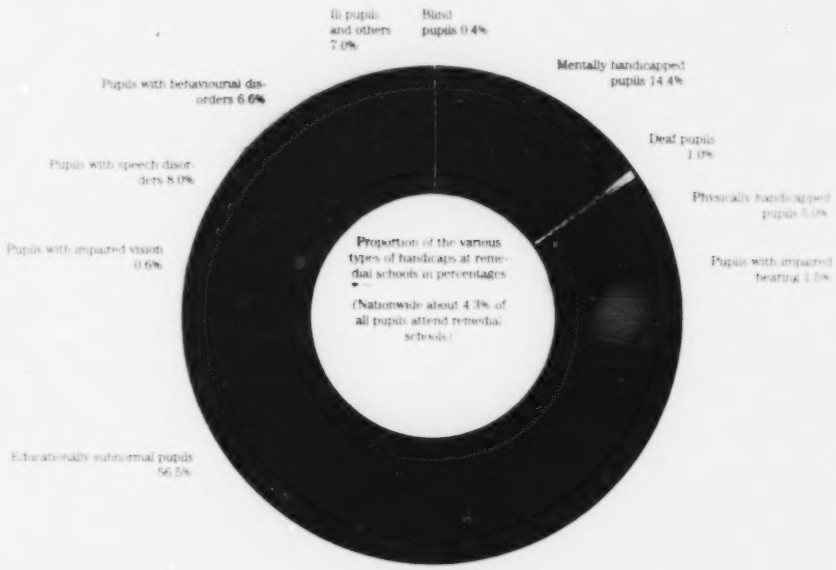
Sonderschulen, i.e. remedial schools, in Germany, have a special assignment. Their purpose is to educate and train children and young persons who are educable but who, because of physical, mental or psychic disorders, cannot simply attend a normal school without the special care and training they require.

The special school system consists of institutions geared to the particular requirements of the pupils and which operate on a remedial teaching basis. They are as follows:

- ▶ schools for the blind
- ▶ schools for the deaf
- ▶ schools for the mentally handicapped
- ▶ schools for the physically handicapped
- ▶ schools for the educationally subnormal
- ▶ schools for pupils with impaired hearing
- ▶ schools for pupils with impaired vision
- ▶ schools for pupils with impaired speech
- ▶ schools for pupils with behavioural disorders
- ▶ schools for ill pupils

Attendance at remedial schools in the Federal Republic of Germany amounts to about 4.3 percent. The proportion of the various types of handicap at special schools is given in the following chart (position 1995): (Chart)

These percentages do not include special schools which act as transitional institutions and which, after several years of supportive assistance, transfer the pupils back to normal schools. Thus, schools for pupils with impaired speech and behavioural disorders (remedial assistance) are, as a general rule, conceived as primary schools


Ill pupils and others 7.0%
Blind pupils 0.4%
Mentally handicapped pupils 14.4%
Deaf pupils 1.0%
Physically handicapped pupils 5.0%
Pupils with impaired hearing 1.5%
Pupils with impaired vision 0.6%
Pupils with speech disorders 8.0%
Pupils with behavioural disorders 6.6%
Educationally subnormal pupils 50.5%
Proportion of the various types of handicaps at remedial schools in percentages
(Nationwide about 4.3% of all pupils attend remedial schools)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

B&W 3/97 Page 3

Education courses provided by the various special schools	Course	Primary School	Main School	Intermediate School	Gramma/Coll. prep. School	School for edu. subnormal	School for ment. handicapped
Special school type							
Schools for blind pupils		●	●	●	●	●	●
Schools for deaf pupils		●	●	●	●	●	
Schools for ment. handicapped pupils							●
Schools for phys. handicapped pupils		●	●	●	●	●	●
Schools for edu. subnormal pupils						●	
Schools for pupils wih impaired hearing		●	●	●	●		
Schools for pupils with impaired vision		●	●	●			
Schools for pupils with speech disorders		●	●				
Schools for pupils with behav. disorders		●	●	●		●	
Schools for ill children	Education courses differ on an individual basis						

(Grundschulen) which transfer their pupils after the 4th or 6th grade to normal schools, i.e. main *(Hauptschule)*, intermediate *(Realschule)* or grammar/college preparatory schools *(Gymnasium)*.

In order to realize the right of handicapped children and young persons to a personally appropriate school education, remedial schools must, if necessary, offer the same final qualifications as normal schools. Wherever this is feasible pupilwise, remedial schools adopt the pattern of normal schools, i.e.the three-pillar system (Main School/*Hauptschule*, Intermediate School/*Realschule*, *Gymnasium*/Grammar/College preparatory school)

If the provision of accomodation is necessary – because of a remedial school's particular assignment or the fact that the distance to an appropriate school is too great for pupils to fulfil the compulsory school attendance requirement - the school is equipped with hostel/boarding facilities which offer pupils accommodation, meals and family-like care.

Some of the secondary education courses at remedial schools are organized on an interstate basis. Because of the relatively small number of blind pupils, for instance, there are only two special schools offering these pupils a *Gymnasium* (grammar/college preparatory) course in the whole of the Federal Republic: the Studies Institute for the Blind in Marburg and the School for the Blind in Königswusterhausen/ Brandenburg. A further example is the special school in Neckargemünd. This school offers a *Gymnasium* course and boarding facilities for physically handicapped pupils coming mainly from the federal states of Baden-Württemberg, Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate and the Saarland. This particular school now also accepts non-handicapped persons since - because of the small number of pupils - it would otherwise no longer be in a position to provide the extensive and crucial assistance involved in a *Gymnasium* course for physically handicapped pupils. This offers a good argument for the present-day practice of sending the majority of physically handicapped children and young persons to normal schools.

The various groups of handicapped children at normal schools are unevenly distributed. About half of all children who have been diagnosed as being physically handicapped, or suffering from impaired vision or hearing, attend normal schools without remedial assistance. The arrangements for individual children with other forms of handicap vary greatly from region to region. Some are placed in so-

Integrated classes normally consist of 12 non-handicapped and 4 handicapped pupils with differing teaching objectives. The handicapped children not only come from the local school district, but also from farther afield. The lack of facilities close to handicapped pupils' homes is often bemoaned.

In **Integrative Classes,** non-handicapped pupils and children who are educationally subnormal, who have speech or behaviourial disorders, all come from the school's catchment area and are taught with differentiated goals in mind. The underlying principle is that the pupils live fairly close to the school.

The **individual integration** of handicapped children, as practised mainly in the Saarland, permits these pupils to attend a school close to their home. Remedial school teachers also take part to a varying extent in all three forms of integrative instruction.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

called "integrated classes", others in integrative normal classes. Individual integration measures in normal schools represent a further category (see box). Mentally handicapped, educationally subnormal and maladjusted pupils are only accepted by remedial schools as a rule.

Because of their deeply rooted structures, remedial schools in Germany are developing more and more into "Special Education Promotion Centres" for children and young persons with handicaps and those in need of special teaching assistance. Apart from help of a purely scholastic nature within remedial schools, these centres also assume responsibility of a diagnostic and advisory nature with regard to pupils attending normal schools, their parents and teachers. They participate in promotional measures, early remedial assistance and vocational integration of handicapped pupils at normal schools. Advisory and supportive services of this nature are frequently affiliated to remedial schools, thus assuring a high standard of expertise in all educational matters.

Social integration in remedial schools is supported by open forms of teaching in which partners and friends of the school take part, and by diverse forms of encounter and cooperation with pupils at normal schools. The spectrum of cooperation ranges from activities, in which all those involved enjoy joint experiences, to projects in which they have joint instruction occasionally or entirely. This enhances handicapped children's opportunities of contact with non-handicapped children. First and foremost, however, these encounters and cooperation projects prepare non-handicapped children "to live and work together with others despite the differences" and help enhance social competence.

REMEDIAL TEACHING FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

In the case of children who are obviously or assumedly in need of remedial assistance, diagnostic examinations are conducted, in cooperation with parents or guardians, and specially trained educational experts, to establish the particular remedial needs of the children concerned. Again with the cooperation of parents, the school authorities decide whether the pupil concerned should attend a normal school, stay there, be taught and given remedial assistance at a special school or in cooperative form between normal and special school.
In other words, the choice of school for handicapped children is no longer the overriding consideration. On the contrary, establishing what sort of special help is required is of prime importance. Only when this has been done can the question of which school is best suited to the child's requirements be answered. For the greater majority of handicapped children, the relative remedial school is regarded as the best place to provide assistance and supportive measures.

Blind pupils

In the school sector in Germany, not only children who cannot see are regarded as blind, but also those whose vision is so seriously impaired that, even after optical correction, they have to behave in the same way as blind children and adults in main areas of life. The category of blind children consequently includes those whose acuity of vision is between 1/50 and 1/20 of normal vision, or, in the case of better vision, where additional disorders of the same degree of severity occur. In unfamiliar surroundings, unlike pupils with normal vision, who usually register everything visually, blind children can only orientate themselves with special assistance and have to obtain information about their environment in other ways - via their auditory or tactile senses.

Social interactions are problematic. Learning processes, in which visuality plays an important part, have to take place by other specific means and methods, e.g. braille.

The percentage of children and young persons in relation to the total number of blind persons is minimal. If one assumes that 0.15 to 0.25 % of the population of the Federal Republic of Germany is blind (including blind persons of working age and those over sixty), the number of blind children and young persons only comes to 0.025 percent. One striking feature about children and young persons who are blind or have severely impaired eyesight is the fact that about two-thirds of them are also educationally subnormal or mentally handicapped. Whatever the case may be, because of their multiple handicaps, this latter group have to be allocated places at schools for the blind. These schools, which usually provide boarding facilities because of their large catchment area, differentiate instruction according to the capability of their pupils. Apart from learning groups who follow normal educational courses, there are other learning groups for pupils who are also educationally subnormal, and groups for those who are also mentally handicapped. The already small number of blind children following normal educational courses within schools for the blind has been gradually declining in recent years as more and more blind children and those with impaired vision go to normal schools. This development stems from the fact that there are now electronic media available which enable blind pupils with the necessary means to take an active and successful part in instruction at normal schools.

Schools for the blind offer the following special measures to blind pupils taking part in integrative instruction at normal schools:

- ▶ advice for the teachers
- ▶ assured provision of special media
- ▶ additional tuition for blind pupils in subjects or lessons where special educational assistance is required
- ▶ supplementary tuition to learn braille, help in coming to terms with the psychic and social aspects of their handicap, mobility training
- ▶ encouragement and organization of parental training in the form of courses at schools for the blind

Schools for the blind regard themselves as special remedial centres for young people with impaired vision. Accordingly, their work is devoted just as much to the early and elementary stages as it is to subsequent assistance.

Central institutions have been set up for blind children with severe multiple handicaps. These include the institutions for deaf and dumb pupils in Hanover (for North Germany) and Wurzburg (for South Germany).

Pupils with impaired eyesight

Children and young persons who, as a result of impaired vision, poor visual perception or the inability to cope with their visual disorder, cannot be given remedial assistance in normal schools, attend schools for impaired eyesight.

In this case, they are, as a rule, pupils whose acuity of vision is only one third or less or whose ability to see, despite better acuity of vision, has the same comparable degree of severity.

With regard to remedial educational requirements, these pupils are basically divided into two groups:

- ▶ pupils with impaired vision of less than 1/3 to 1/20 of normal eyesight
- ▶ pupils with severely impaired vision of less than 1/20 to 1/50 of normal eyesight.

Schools for impaired eyesight are attended mainly by pupils whose vision is between 1/3 and 1/20 of the norm. It is possible to exceed or fall below these given limits in individual cases which means that the functional capacity

P&W 2/97 Page 6

Stephanie is "working" with her reader. There is a (magnifying) camera beneath the screen.

of eyesight measured can only be regarded as a guideline.

Regardless of the school attended by a children with impaired vision, they need remedial assistance. The manner and extent of this help depends on the case in question.

It is very important to help individual pupils with impaired vision to apply the additional exertion required as a result of their handicap as rationally as possible and - wherever possible - to relieve personal strain. This can be achieved by employing special media to activate the functional reserves in the visual aids which play such an important part in the remedial assistance of these handicapped pupils. They help pupils to see better in three different ways:

- by bringing the object being looked at closer to the eye
- by changing the size of the object (by means of enlarged print, for instance)
- by resorting to optical or electronic aids. In the case of optical assistance, there are three types of magnifying lens-systems. Magnifying glasses, magnifying spectacles and telescopic spectacles. Among the electronic aids, the visual display unit is the one most commonly used. The employment of adapted up-to-date information and communication technologies is becoming increasingly important.

As a rule, even down to 1/20 of normal visual acuity, cognitive, psychomotor and socio-emotional behaviour is mainly influenced by visual stimuli. At 1/3 and less of normal visual acuity, however, the registration and processing of optically ascertainable information is considerably impeded. In the case of pupils with less than 1/20 of normal eyesight, non-visual stimuli increase in importance, making special forms of teaching and learning necessary. By means of technical teaching and learning aids, schools for persons with impaired vision attempt to utilize the visual capacities that still exist and to improve them with consistent practice. If pupils are taught in a normal school, schools for impaired vision offer an advice service which provides the necessary supportive measures in such cases, too.

In those cases where pupils with impaired vision have additional handicaps, individual examinations indicate which other type of remedial school would be the most suitable to help these pupils.

Deaf pupils

People who cannot hear within the important frequency band for speech (500 to 4,000 Hz) are described as deaf. This disorder can occur before, during or after birth. In 50 percent of all cases, deafness is hereditary. In many cases, however, damage to the auditory organs is linked with other defects which, as a result, has caused the number of multiply-handicapped deaf children to grow in recent years. At most of the schools for the deaf, the proportion of multiply-handicapped pupils comes to about 25 percent.

For speech development, it is of the utmost importance that deafness in children at birth is diagnosed at an early stage. In such cases optimum provision of a hearing aid is possible. This is of exceptional importance since the ability to hear is not fully developed at birth. In the first months and years of life, the development of the central nervous structures in the human brain, which are necessary for hearing, depends on the what comes from the surroundings, i.e. whether auditory stimuli can be convyed.

Consequently, the provision of hearing aids as early as possible can help to reduce defective hearing – which had be diagnosed as deafness initially – to such an extent, that various levels of hearing are possible. The basic requirement is, in every case, suitable expert assistance which is offered at the earliest possible stage by staff at schools for the deaf. Parents are involved as soon as possible in these early remedial measures which are implemented as "home speech training" throughout the Federal Republic.

Improvements in early diagnosis, early provision of hearing aids and surgical measures have resulted in a considerable reduction in the number of deaf children and young persons for whom communication via the ears is practically impossible and who, in principle, have to take in their surroundings in a visual-optical manner. As a result, more than a few schools for the deaf are now intent on teaching pupils with impaired hearing, and those categorized as deaf, in joint classes, and no longer separately.

Systematic individual training in hearing and lip-reading

Pupils with the necessary auditory competence can acquire the same qualifications obtainable at normal schools. The number of young persons attending secondary schools (*Hauptschule*/main school, *Realschule*/intermediate school and *Gymnasium*/grammar/college preparatory school) has steadily grown in recent years. Five special schools providing a *Gymnasium* course have been set up in Germany (in Essen, Hamburg and Berlin for North Germany, Stegen, near Freiburg, and Munich for South Germany) for pupils with defective hearing, who, whilst having the ability to acquire a university entrance qualification, cannot do so at normal schools because of their handicap.

Deaf pupils who are also educationally subnormal are taught in special classes or departments at schools for the deaf. Deaf pupils who are also mentally handicapped are given the necessary assistance in special institutions for the "aphasic deaf".

Pupils with impaired hearing

Pupils at schools for impaired hearing are children and young persons whose ability to hear and auditive perception are so seriously affected that, even with a hearing aid, they still cannot be given appropriate remedial assistance at normal schools and are in need of remedial teaching and child-care measures to overcome or at least reduce their handicap.

Children and young persons who, whilst or after learning to speak, suffer loss of hearing of more than 90 dB in the 500 Hz frequency range, i.e. deafness, are admitted to schools for impaired hearing if, because of their inability to communicate, they cannot be further helped in line with their capabilities, despite supportive remedial measures, at normal schools, and their speech can only be maintained and further developed at schools for impaired hearing.

Pupils who, because of their defective hearing, are unable to learn to speak by auditive means, even with a hearing aid, are admitted to schools for the deaf. If, in borderline cases, there are doubts about admitting a pupil with defective hearing to such a school, he or she is, on principle, sent initially to a school for impaired hearing. This applies to schools where a distinction is made between the instruction for pupils who are "deaf" and those who are "hard of hearing".

Children and young persons with additional handicaps are admitted to a school for impaired hearing if their auditive speech

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

defect is central to their handicapped state as a whole and this type of school offers them the most effective help. Borderline cases are carefully assessed to establish which school will be the most beneficial for the children in question.

Many parents are confronted with the question whether they should send their child with defective hearing to a school for impaired hearing or to a normal school. There is much to be said for integration into the local kindergarten or primary school because the child lives at home and can establish contacts in its immediate surroundings. At the same time, the handicapped child learns to get on with children of normal hearing and to establish its personal possibilities and limits. The argument in favour of attending a school for impaired hearing is that the child finds itself in a learning environment completely tailored to its own limitations, making possible and facilitating scholastic progress in all sorts of directions.

In more than a few cases, parents initially want their child to attend a normal educational institution. If they then realize that the constant overtaxation and negative social experiences are destroying the child's self-confidence and learning motivation, they decide to transfer their child to an institution for impaired hearing. It is an undeniable fact, however, that many children with defective hearing or who have become deaf, have successfully negotiated schools for non-handicapped pupils without any identifiable disadvantages subsequently. The integrative educational promotion of children with defective hearing at a normal school, however, should only be attempted if special supportive help is provided by a teacher from a school for impaired hearing. The "cooperation teacher's" principal task is not so much to fill in the gaps in knowledge a handicapped pupil has gained and is still gaining, but to advise the parents and teachers and make a sensitive observation of the child's social-communicative development.

The extent to which the situation has changed for children and young persons with defective hearing is shown by the fact that today only one-third of the number of pupils regarded as being remedial school category in the early 1970s now attend schools for impaired hearing. At the time, field surveys reveal that the number of children with defective hearing came to 0.18 percent. Today that number at the relative remedial schools has dropped to 0.065 percent.

Nowadays, receptive electrodes can be implanted surgically in the cochlea. This implantation is able to directly stimulate the auditory nerve electrically. By means of these stimulations, the auditory centre in the central nervous system is addressed. In the case of persons who have become deaf after learning to speak, the cochlea implantation is proving highly successful. This operation is also proving successful in the case of deaf children, provided the auditory nerve is intact and remedial auditory training follows on immediately.

The cochlea implantation has turned out to be a highly effective "prosthesis" which, for the very first time, makes it possible to bypass the defective inner ear and to reach the auditory centre in the central nervous system by electrically stimulating the auditory nerve. Since 98 percent of all persons with defective hearing still have an intact auditory nerve, the operation is possible in most cases

Mentally handicapped children

Mental disability is usually caused by damage to the central nervous system before or after birth. It may, for instance, have something to do with pecularities in the number and arrangement of the chromosomes, or be hereditary, but nevertheless rare metabolic disorders. In individual cases, social factors, such as extreme hospitalization, can lead to mental disability.

Brain damage, which is usually the case, can result in further physical defects. It can affect the sustenacular and locomotor system, the ability to see and hear, and internal organs. It can also trigger convulsive disorders. These functional disorders, on top of existing restricted learning ability, seriously impede the already slow rate of learning.

Basically, every mentally handicapped child, regardless of the manner and severity of the handicap, is included in remedial teaching measures. There is no distinction made between non-educable and educable children. Accordingly, the particular learning situation is taken into full account when planning and organizing remedial measures.

Schools for the mentally handicapped have been set up for pupils whose learning behaviour and development are considerably below what one would expect at their age. It is for this reason that they cannot be given remedial assistance, or adequate remedial assistance in schools for educationally subnormal pupils.

Various degrees of learning ability and types of learning behaviour can be ascertained from the varying extent of the mental handicap. They are not inflexible, however. By employing appropriate measures, which stimulate and improve learning behaviour, relatively great progress can be made

R R W 3/07 Page 9

The learning behaviour of mentally handicapped pupils is mainly characterized by the direct link to vital needs and the marked degree of dependence on what has been learnt in the original learning situation. For this reason, a large measure of practice and repetition of the learning material is required. To avoid fixation on a specific learning environment or specific persons, exercises are undertaken wherever possible in differing situations.

Even less than is the case with other pupils, completion of school education does not necessarily mean the end of the learning process for mentally handicapped pupils. Particularly in the case of the latter, continuation of the learning process in adulthood, such as in a workshop for the disabled, for instance, is of great importance.

Unlike the class system in normal schools, where pupils move up year by year, schools for the mentally handicapped organize their courses in four stages, each of which lasts for three years as a rule. In addition to lower, middle and upper school, which cover the 9 years of compulsory schooling, there is also a practical stage *(Werkstufe)* which likewise lasts three years and which is a sort of vocational school within the school for the mentally handicapped. In other words, the *Werkstufe* prepares pupils for occupational activity which takes place almost without exception in a workshop for the disabled.

Physically handicapped pupils

In normal usage, physical handicaps are usually regarded as impaired movement and specific organic damage. Medical terms such as flaccid paralysis, cerebral motor disturbances, malformation of internal organs, osteomyelitis, rachiopathy, rheumathritis and vitreous bone disease do not adequately describe the basic remedial requirements of the pupils and the tasks of schools for the physically handicapped. It is of utmost importance for the remedial education of pupils whether their impaired movement or organic damage also affects their cognitive, emotional or social capabilities. Disturbances, slowing down and breakdowns in movement may occur when handling work materials or completing given tasks.

The effects of physical disability call for special remedial assistance in childhood and adolescence. If this assistance cannot be given in normal or other types of special schools, these pupils are admitted to a school for the physically handicapped.

At schools for the physically handicapped, pupils are to be enabled to reach as high a level of performance as possible, with the powers they still retain, to acquire the necessary self-confidence. Pupils not only learn to see their own limits realistically, but also to realize that, despite all handicaps, they can still fulfil useful functions in their environment and society. The choice of learning material takes into account the different and frequently limited development of physically handicapped pupils. In every case, the school programme is supplemented by physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy, on an individual or group basis.

In addition to the groups of persons mentioned above, schools for the physically handicapped also admit pupils

- who are in great need of assistance and care, e.g. pupils with serious cerebral motor disorders (severe tetraplegia) who are dependent on help for their everyday needs;
- whose emotional and social development has still not progressed to the stage where they can be taught in a group over a length of time. This condition can occur as the result of severely impaired development or multiple handicaps, or as the result of extreme social disturbances in the case of slight motor disorders, e.g. restless, physically handicapped pupils with behaviourial disorders;
- whose ability to withstand strain is so limited because of a severe handicap or organic illness that they can only participate in instruction occasionally.

PHOTO: BILDSTELLE

Because of the great amount of time and effort involved in medical care and various forms of therapy (physiotherapy, occupational therapy, swimming and riding therapy, speech therapy), schools for the physically handicapped are all-day schools as a rule. Since the catchment areas of these schools are relatively large, most of them provide boarding facilities. The number of multiply-handicapped and severely handicapped children and young persons has greatly increased in recent years. On the other hand, the demand for places in schools for the physically handicapped by parents of pupils with minor forms of physical disability or partial disorders has likewise grown. Because of the wide range of physical limitations and the varying ability of the pupils, schools for the physically handicapped represent highly differentiated remedial school centres.

Educationally subnormal pupils

Schools for the educationally subnormal admit pupils who, because of their learning and achievement handicaps, cannot receive sufficient remedial assistance at primary or main schools. Pupils are described as "educationally subnormal" when their ability to learn is considerably and persistently impaired, whose performance level and behaviourial forms deviate markedly from the norm of similarly-aged children and who, despite special learning aids, cannot be given adequate remedial aid at primary and main schools.

There are various types of learning and achievement inability at school. They have highly differing causes and depend to a great extent on the particular life and learning situation. All educationally subnormal children have one thing in common: they are not in a position to cope with the learning material in normal schools even though there is no identifiable reason for this lack of ability - such as sensory, physical or speech defects. These children are also not mentally handicapped.

In other words, educationally subnormal pupils are chiefly characterized by a very low level of scholastic learning ability. This is usually linked with an ascertainable and obvious low IQ. A learning handicap, however, cannot always be regarded as the inability to learn in general, but as a series of difficulties in respect of specific tasks which include less limited ability in other areas and compensatory learning deficits. In school, these children and young persons are conspicuous for their low level of achievement in reading, arithmetic and writing, and written language usage, although it is frequently the case that no abnormalities are apparent at home or during the preschool period. In many cases, there is evidence of retarded development of cognitive and speech functions, in social behaviour and differentiation of emotionality.

Apart from the learning handicap as an extensive and persistent impairment of learning, there is also a broad range of learning disorders. These are of a fluid nature and can consolidate into learning handicaps through unfavourable interaction. Extensive and persistent inability to read occurs in the case of such "generalized learning disturbances" - but also with other behaviourial and peformance structures. Generalized learning disorders in the sense of learning disability can only be assumed where there is a marked and continuous inability to learn and achieve. This is not the case in many of the learning difficulties in school.

Spastically paralyzed children feel particulary at ease in a spherical bath

Early educational intervention and remedial assistance - as offered in primary schools - can effectively combat the emergence, spread and consolidation of learning disturbances.

On this basis, educationally subnormal pupils can be divided into two main groups in practice:

- educationally subnormal pupils with a perceptibly low IQ. In this case, the inability to learn and progress is of a general nature. This is attributable to an overall lack of intelligence. Social behaviour has not developed in line with age,
- educationally subnormal with generalized learning disturbances because of neurological malfunction or constitutional weaknesses. In the case of these pupils, the lack of uniformity in their learning and performance behaviour is conspicuous. Their intelligence level is often not or only slightly diminished. Localized failures, weaknesses or irregularities stand to the fore and, in the course of time, have developed into learning and achievement behaviour inappropriate to the pupil's age.

In the first instance, the main task of schools for the educationally subnormal is to overcome all pupils' fear of failure and to remotivate them to learn. The readiness to mix with others, joie de vivre and self-confidence have to be developed and the interest in scholastic learning and achievement reawakened. In addition, the teacher must keep a very careful eye on each pupil. He must go into the pupil's specific problems and examine his difficulties and possibilities and, by means of a continuous assessment process, establish the appropriate points of departure for remedial assistance.

Over and above this, teachers must develop behaviour patterns in the social and achievement area which enable pupils to shape their own lives and safeguard their existence as much as possible themselves. Teaching social competences and enabling pupils to gain personal experience are just as essential as the individually tailored teaching of knowledge and skills. The education plan is consequently so designed in all the states in the Federal Republic that it permits teaching staff to aim for maximum individualisation.

Pupils with speech handicaps

Schools for Speech Handicaps take in children and young persons who are so handicapped in language, speech, communicative action or faculties that they are incapable of following the education course at a normal school. Such pupils are only admitted to a remedial school if ambulant or temporary in-patient treatment promises little success.

As a general rule, it concerns children and young persons whose speech development is severely retarded and display symptoms of multiple or universal stammering or dysgrammatism. It may also concern pupils whose developed speech is disturbed (dysphasia) and who suffer central impediments to speech development (audimutism, acoustic agnosia) Speech handicaps can also result from patholical changes in the speech organs.

Schools for the speech handicapped admit pupils with

- retarded speech development
- psychic deafness
- audimutism
- asphasia
- dysgrammatism
- battarism
- stuttering
- psychogenic mutism
- functionally or organically conditioned stammering
- paraphonia.

By means of intensive preschool and concomitant (ambulant) therapeutic speech treatment whilst at school, the number of children entering schools for the speech handicapped can be considerably reduced. Consequently, all the federal states not only provide speech therapy courses for kindergarten children; numerous courses of this nature are also available for schoolchildren who, although they can take part successfully in lessons at normal schools, suffer from speech difficulties and are in need of intensive remedial attention.

Like ambulant speech therapy courses, it is the task of schools for impaired speech to eliminate their pupils' disorders, to promote their ability to mix with others orally, and their powers of expression and communication, to ensure that their overall development proceeds positively, that they lose their shyness in company and acquire the necessary self-confidence. Most pupils at these remedial schools overcome their speech impairment in one to three years, or overcome it to such an extent that they can take part in lessons at normal schools. Consequently, the majority of schools for speech disorders only consist of a primary school level, i.e. classes 1 to 4 or 6, as the case may be.

Pupils with hearing, physical, mental and visual disorders, and who also have speech handicaps, usually attend the relative special schools. Speech therapy measures are carried out in the latter, too.

Two children with speech disorders comunicate with the help of a computer

This also applies to schools for the educationally subnormal in which a considerable number of the pupils are urgently in need of speech therapy.

The schools for speech handicaps cooperate in a large catchment area with existing preschool and school facilities. Apart from duties at their own school, their staff are also deployed in the early remedial treatment of children with speech disorders, and ambulant speech therapy at normal schools.

The favourable remedial opportunities for the pupils - small classes, superbly equipped for the most part - have a magnetic effect on the parents of children with generally retarded development. As a consequence, schools for impaired speech have to be very conscientious in their diagnostic work and, to some extent, proceed restrictively to avoid the danger of becoming schools for children with generally retarded development.

It is of interest to note that in Germany boys are much more often afflicted by speech handicaps than girls (ratio 4:1).

Pupils with behavioural disorders

In recent years, a great change has taken place in the remedial treatment of persons with behaviourial disturbances. An educational process has been developed which attempts to combat the various forms of behaviour deviating from the norm by means of prophylactic, intervening and restorative measures. In this context, an individual teaching programme is aimed at which also includes the immediate environment of the person concerned. A large number of remedial, social and therapeutic education measures are applied. Today, the admission of a pupil to a home for corrective education, a psychiatric institution for children and young persons or prison is normally regarded only as a last resort in dealing with maladjusted young persons.

Pupils are admitted to schools for behaviourial disorders whose psychic forms of experience and processing lead to disturbances in learning processes and social behaviour, and whose right to education at normal schools cannot be guaranteed. These pupils shut themselves off from or reject education at normal schools to such an extent that their own development and that of their classmates is severely disturbed or jeopardized. Consequently, schools for behavioural disorders admit children and young persons if, because of their diversity, frequency of occurrence or intensity, the symptoms of abnormal behaviour cannot be overcome by general educational means and ambulant treatment.

Experience shows that less than half the total number of pupils said to have behaviourial disorders are regarded as remedial school cases. The majority are merely in need of therapeutic treatment. In more than a few places, small classes within the framework of primary and main schools have been set up for these pupils.

In many cases at schools for abnormal behaviour, a link between disturbed emotionality and social conspicuousness has been noted. This manifests itself in the form of excessive aggressiveness, lack of control and unbridled expression of emotions. On the other hand, there are psycho-socially disturbed children who withdraw from company and shut themselves off, remain passive or are generally inhibited.

In this case, apart from agressive reactions, symptoms of isolation, regression and resignation come to the fore. Internal tension and organic disorders can result in uncontrolled discharge of urine and excrement, dietary disorders, headaches, twitching, stomach complaints, sleep disturbances, vegetative overexcitability, increased susceptibility to illnesses and general motor overactivity.

Even in the case of average or above average intelligence, the scholastic achievements of pupils with behaviourial disorders are frequently poor because these pupils can only be occasionally motivated, or not at all. Lack of concentration, resignation in learning or examination situations, forgetfulness, lack of punctuality, and untidiness, occur in increased measure.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Schools for behavioural disorders have to help pupils to overcome their problems. To this end, they must be aware of the endogenic and exogenic causes of the defective development in order to overcome or mitigate them. These schools endeavour to reintegrate their pupils into normal schools as soon as possible. If this is not possible, they do all they can to ensure that their pupils have not fallen behind other pupils when they leave school. To avoid pupils graduating from schools for behavioural disorders being stigmatized, the final certificates are issued for the form of school education these pupils have received. Whereas the majority of schools for behavioural disorders follow the curriculum for schools for the educationally subnormal or main school *(Hauptschule)*, intermediate school *(Realschule)* courses are also offered in some cases. These schools usually have boarding facilities.

Most states in the Federal Republic of Germany have redesignated schools for behavioural disorders. The new name of *Schule für Erziehungshilfe* (School for Educational Assistance) has met with a positive reaction in general. The number of male children and adolescents with behavioural disorders is much greater than that of their female counterparts (ratio about 3:1).

Ill pupils

Children and young persons of school age who, because of prolonged illness, have been admitted to hospital, can also receive scholastic instruction within the limits of what is medically allowed. Basically, hospital schools endeavour to educate pupils from all types of schools. Their aim is twofold:

- **On being restored to health, pupils are to be enabled as far as possible to rejoin the class they were in before they fell ill;**
- **Instruction is also designed to assist pupils to cope with their ill state by helping them to overcome boredom and resignation, thus having a therapeutic effect.**

If, however, the sick pupil has urgent existential problems, achievement-oriented instruction is only partially justified and offers little prospect of success.

The structure of a hospital school and the way it is organized depends very much on the type of hospital teaching provided. Despite the great variety of hospitals, a clear distinction can be made between three types: general hospitals, health and rehabilitation clinics and psychosomatic clinics.

If the pupil cannot come to the learning room, the teacher goes to the pupil's bedside. The teacher bases his tuition on the the curriculum for the type of school for the pupil in question. The material taught by the hospital teachers is broadly spread. As a rule, it is restricted to mathematics, German and foreign languages to keep the pupils at the required standard or to help them achieve the standard in the main subjects which will allow them to rejoin their former class.

The tuition for pupils at a school for the ill can be anything up to 12 lessons a week. The extent of teaching is decided on by the medical and teaching staff jointly.

Hospital schools are expected to contact the school attended hitherto by the pupil and to maintain this contact for the whole duration of the sick child's hospitalization. The clinic school also confers with the pupil's school before reports are issued and prior to the decision on his promotion to the next class.

Hospital tuition is of great importance, particularly for seriously ill children. When the teacher comes to the seriously ill

The Janusz Korczak School for ill Pupils. The School is affiliated to the Medical Faculty at Aachen Technical University. It allows seriously ill children to continue their scholastic education. Even *Abitur* (university entrance qualification) can be taken there. If necessary, teachers give bedside tuition. Teaching rooms are also available

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

child's bed, the child finds new hope. Because of the very fact that he is being offered tuition, the pupil concludes that it can't be so bad after all if preparations are being made for reintegration into his old class. This newly acquired courage can have an exceptionally favourable effect on the treatment and awakens healing forces in the young patient. In the case of seriously ill children great pains must be taken to see that the agreed tuition is not cancelled. The children regard such cancellations, which are otherwise quite normal, as an indication that their condition has become alarmingly worse.

For children with long-term illnesses who are unable to attend school, tuition can be given at the child's home instead of in school. This home tuition is given wherever the child is located. As a rule, it is the parental home.

Children and young persons are entitled to home tuition if, for instance, the extreme degree of the handicap inevitably exempts pupils from compulsory school attendance or if, because of illness, they have been prevented from attending school for more than eight weeks. If it can be foreseen that an illness will probably last longer than eight weeks, home tuition can take place right from the start. Home tuition is also granted to children who, although they are attending school, have to continually miss lessons on certain days because of a long-term illness, e.g. severe renal insufficiency, leukaemia or malignant tumors, severe haemophilia and haemorragic disorders.

Home tuition can, of course, only be given if the overall condition of the child concerned makes it permissible and the health of the teacher is in no way endangered as a result.

The aim of home tuition is to provide education which replaces, in appropriate measure, teaching at school. It is geared basically to the curriculum of the school which the sick pupil is obliged to attend, or which he would attend if he were not ill. Home tuition is not provided in all the federal states. In those states where it is available for ill pupils, the extent of the tuition given varies. Ideally, home tuition is given by teachers from the school responsible for the ill child - which is the best way of preserving the link.

EARLY REMEDIAL TREATMENT OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

If a medical diagnosis of babies and infants indicates a possible handicap, they can, at the wish of the parents, be given remedial assistance - even at this early stage - via advice offices which are located for the most part in remedial schools.

The aim of the work performed at the advice centres is to identify handicaps at an early stage and, as far as possible, overcome or prevent them. Parents are also given advice and guidance on how to deal with their handicapped child.

The staff at the advice centres - teachers, child care workers, physiotherapists, speech therapists, socio-educational and medical services - work in close cooperation. The help and remedial assistance provided by the advice centres is free of charge for the parents. The remedial measures and guidance for the parents can also take place in the home within the framework of house visits.

Children who, because of a handicap, seem to be in need of remedial help before reaching compulsory school age, can, with parental agreement, be admitted to remedial or remedial school kindergartens at the age of three (at the age of two for physically handicapped children). In view of the various types of handicap, these institutions are specialized (for children who are blind, who have impaired vision, are deaf, have impaired hearing, are mentally or physically handicapped, have speech disorders, or who need remedial treatment).

The children are looked after in small groups under the charge of child-care workers. Their work is supplemented by special school teachers. When children at a pre-school remedial institution reach compulsory school age, the decision is taken for each individual child whether it requires remedial attention at a special school or is able to attend a normal school.

PHOTO: BRUNO PRÄNDEL

Final school certificates and remedial education locations

Provided it is purposeful - despite the pupils' handicaps - all the schools mentioned above offer the scholastic courses which the education system provides for non-handicapped children (see chart on page 3). The schools for impaired hearing, for instance, offer primary, main, intermediate and grammar school/college preparatory courses. This means that pupils with defective hearing at a special school can, depending on ability, obtain a final main school or intermediate school certificate, or *Abitur* (university entrance qualification). To quote a second example, schools for the physically handicapped offer all the final school certificates obtainable in the German education system, i.e. main school, intermediate school, *Abitur* and the final certificate issued by schools for the educationally subnormal (remedial school). These schools have classes for physically handicapped children who are also mentally handicapped.

In other words, the admission of a child to a remedial school does not mean that final secondary school certificates are out of reach. On the contrary, it is only because of the education provided by special schools catering for their disability that suitable handicapped children and young persons are given the chance to acquire secondary school certificates - despite their handicap - and the opportunity to follow qualifying vocational training or higher education studies. In those cases where longer learning periods are necessary to obtain a specific school certificate, school attendance is extended accordingly.

It is the duty of remedial schools to assist all handicapped children and young persons - who are considered suitable - to the point where they can be admitted to normal schools during their scholastic career. A relatively large number of those at schools for pupils with speech defects and for those with behaviourial disorders return to normal schools, usually transferring from primary to main school.

There are many pilot schemes experimenting with the possibilities of cooperation between normal and remedial schools. In addition, the basic conditions for the joint tuition of handicapped and non-handicapped pupils have been re-examined in recent years. Pilot schemes and school experiments have shown that the acceptability of normal schools for handicapped pupils and those threatened with handicaps can be considerably improved through the creation of the necessary framework conditions. In the meantime, parents or legal guardians have been granted increased rights of co-determination with regard to the decision on the right place for children in need of remedial teaching. This approximates to the right of choice between a normal school, i.e. primary school, or special school, even if the necessary remedial assistance cannot always be guaranteed.

The desire for the social integration of handicapped pupils is fulfilled best of all by separating handicapped and non-handicapped children as little as possible. Both in school transport and school life in general, handicapped and non-handicapped pupils should experience and get along with each other. Natural encounter is realized best of all where normal and remedial schools share the same location or are both housed in school centres. These findings have led to remedial schools being set up in general in close proximity to normal schools.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF HANDICAPPED YOUNG PERSONS

Great importance is attached to the vocational integration of young persons. For this reason, whilst pupils are still at a remedial school, special attention is paid to instruction of a preparatory vocational nature. To this end, special schools have set up their own teaching programme which is variously designated from state to state for their senior classes.

By means of *Arbeitslehre* (acquaintance with the working world) or *Berufswahlunterricht* (instruction on choice of career), in which career advisers from job centres also take part, boys and girls are helped to gain adequate vocational maturity and to make a personal choice of career.

Pupils leaving special schools can be basically divided into five groups when transferring to vocational training:

- handicapped young persons who, without further help, commence an apprenticeship in a recognized training occupation after leaving school.
- Young persons who are able to complete an apprenticeship in a recognized occupation if they are given special educational support in a vocational school.
- Young persons who, prior to embarking on vocational training, must complete a special preparatory vocational programme to gain adequate occupational maturity.
- Young persons who need extensive remedial and socio-educational assistance and who consequently receive their training at a vocational education institution.
- Young persons who, on account of the severity of their handicap, are unable to undergo vocational training. These handicapped persons receive preparatory training for simple jobs in the so-called *Werkstufe* (practical work stage) at remedial schools or at a *Werkstatt für Behinderte* (workshop for the disabled).

On the one side, "preparatory vocational measures" include preparatory occupational years at vocational schools, in which handicapped young persons receive instruction in two or three occupations together with main school leavers who have still not reached vocational maturity. On the other side, preparatory vocational measures in the form of courses aimed at gaining vocational maturity are run by private organizations and financed by the Federal Institute of Labour. About a half of all those completing special schools have taken part in preparatory vocational measures in recent years. The success of this programme is shown by the fact that the majority of young persons who have undergone "preparatory vocational measures" embark upon an apprenticeship.

The vocational training of handicapped young persons, like that of their non-handicapped counterparts, takes place on the open market. In addition, young persons have the opportunity of completing their training at a *Berufsbildungswerk*, i.e. a vocational education institute. The cutthroat competition, which has been going on for years to the detriment of the various youth problem groups (handicapped, main school leavers, foreigners), has enhanced the status of vocational education institutions. These institutions are of an interplant and interregional nature and are run by private organizations. In all, there are 47 such vocational education institutions available, offering about 13,500 training places for handicapped persons.

PHOTO: VOLKER DRUSCH

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Eight further institutions are at the planning stage. Extensive socio-educational assistance (social service, medical and psychological care) is central to the concept of these vocational education institutions which combine practical training in workshops with a remedial vocational school under one roof. Wherever necessary, the vocational education institutions provide boarding facilities.

This also offers handicapped young persons from sparsely populated areas the opportunity of vocational training.

The effectiveness of the vocational education institutes is the fact that practical training, school education and social education are located under one roof, and that the close cooperation between these services and their staff makes optimum promotion of individual handicapped persons possible. The disadvantage, of course, is that handicapped young persons are receiving help in a special situation during their training, making links with normal vocational training facilities and the handicapped themselves impossible. Problems arise - particularly in times of great unemployment - to find jobs on the labour market on conclusion of vocational training.

The considerable costs involved in training at vocational education institutions - which are assumed by the labour administration - are justified on the grounds that young persons who have completed their vocational training successfully have a much greater chance of finding a job on the employment market than those who have not.

When mentally handicapped young adults leave remedial school (aged usually 18 to 20), a place is offered them at a "workshop for the disabled". Here they perform simple tasks.

Most mentally handicapped children have such impaired powers of reception, processing and expression that they probably require special assistance for the rest of their lives. In the field of vocational integration, in particular, they require constant supportive measures. On leaving the school for the mentally handicapped or another form of remedial school, mentally handicapped young persons are usually admitted to a workshop for the disabled.

Consequently, schools for the mentally handicapped are so organized that the *Werkstufe* (mentioned above) - for pupils who have completed middle and senior school classes - prepares them for some particular job in the disabled workshop. In other words, the *Werkstufe* at these schools represents the vocational school stage for the mentally handicapped.

The general learning ability of mentally handicapped young persons is further promoted during the *Werkstufe*. They are prepared for the transfer to adult life. In this context, the objective is to enable them to cope with, integrate into, occupy themselves and hold their own in the life (in families or groups), work, leisure-time, partnership and public sectors.

The time needed to process the various sectors varies from individual to individual. All sectors are of equal importance, however, if a subsequent vocational activity is to prove possible.

Thus the *Werkstufe* provides the foundation for subsequent activity in a workshop for the disabled. It provides preparation (tailored to mental disablement) for subsequent occupational activity, and thus represents a sort of "vocational training" according to manner and content.

To this end, pupils receive instruction from technical teachers - without concentrating on one-sided vocational skills - and are familiarized with working techniques and various materials. This takes place in realistic work projects in which pupils of both sexes are equally involved. In addition, mentally handicapped young persons are introduced to the work and leisure aspects of adult life through stays at school hostels in the country, work experience (in workshops for the disabled) and participation in cultural events.

Pupils attend the *Werkstufe* at schools for the mentally handicapped for three years as a rule. Time spent at school can be extended to achieve "workshop maturity" - up to a period of six years in some states.

When transferring from the *Werkstufe* to a workshop for disabled persons, care is taken, by means of an initial observation period, to establish whether such a workshop is the most suitable institution for the integration of these mentally handicapped per-

Training programmes in vocational education institutions
Example: Berufsbildungswerk Abensberg

Address: Regensburger Straße 60, D-93326 Abensberg
Sponsor: Cath. Youth Welfare of the Diocese of Regensburg Inc.
Training Places: 290
Eligible persons: Educationally subnormal and physically handicapped young persons

Training programme	
Vocational field/job title	
Building trade	
Bricklayer	36
Textile and clothing	
Clothing seamstress	12
Clothing finisher	24
Electrical engineering	
Electrician	24
Electrician-fitter	42
Food and household	
Assistant cook	36
Cook	36
Butcher	36
Baker	36
Home economist assistant	36
Municip. home economist	36
Skilled catering assistant	36
Caterer	36
Painting and decorating	
Skilled painter and varnisher	36
Painter and varnisher	36
Agriculture	
Skilled gardener specializing in landscape	36
Landscape gardener	36
Woodwork	
Skilled woodworker	36
Joiner	36
Business and administration	
Salesman/woman	24
Retail salesman/woman	36
Data processing salesman/woman	36
Metalwork	
Skilled metal worker	36
Machine tool cutting	
Lathe operator	36
Miller	36
Machine building mechanic (general)	
General machine building	42
Machine builder specializing in constructional engineering	42
Chip removal mechanic specializing in lathe work	42

PHOTO: VOLKER DERLATH

sons, who have now reached adulthood in most cases, or whether later employment within the workshop for disabled persons sector (or, in individual cases, the labour market in general) seems feasible. This observation period usually lasts four weeks, and in individual cases, a maximum of three months. The observation period can be dispensed with if it is obvious that the person concerned fulfils all the requirements for admission to a workshop for the disabled.

There are, at the present time, some 590 officially or temporarily recognized workshops for the disabled, offering about 160,000 places. Apart from a few regional bottlenecks, this number is sufficient to cater for all suitable young persons from schools for the mentally handicapped.

In all areas of the workshops for the disabled (observation period, work training, work sector) skilled staff, who have been trained in remedial education, are available. Vocational rehabilitation is constantly attended by educational, social, psychological, medical, nursing and therapeutic services in all three sectors. Social workers look after the workshop employees, advise their relatives, provide help in problem situations or in dealing with the authorities, and organize therapeutic, sport and leisure-time programmes, for which two to three hours are set aside during regular working time.

Mentally handicapped persons constitute the largest group (80%) at workshops for the disabled. The number of those with multiple and psychic handicaps (psychoses, neuroses) has been growing in recent times. A number of these workshops also includes a workshop for the blind. Persons with psychic handicaps are often placed in mini-workshops since their joint employment with mentally handicapped persons is not advisable.

Attendance of a workshop for the disabled is basically voluntary. They are not compulsorily admitted or obliged to work. The basic requirements for admission are that there is no need for exceptional care, no danger to others or themselves and that a minimum of economically useful work can be performed. By exceptional care is meant constant nursing attention. A minimum is adequate in the case of economically productive work. The degree of economic effectiveness is no longer important.

Workshops for the disabled are organized on commercial lines and try in each case to establish an individual image. The workshops must aim at economically productive work to be able to pay those employed in the work sector remuneration in line with their output. For the self-esteem of the handicapped persons themselves, it is also of great importance that they have an economically purposeful and efficient job. To avoid loss of orders because of economic fluctuations, the workshops normally have three sources of income: commissioned work, own production and services. This embraces, for instance, assembly, packing and dispatching contracts for industrial, craft and commercial firms. Many workshops boast considerable production of their own (wooden toys, craft products, textiles or garden furniture). EDP services represent a relatively new development. Many of the workshops also offer garden and landscaping services, agriculture, catering and party service, laundries, printing and dispatch of advertising material.

The costs incurred for individual handicapped persons at workshops for the disabled are usually assumed by regional social assistance agencies. The majority of the handicapped persons employed in workshops for the disabled have employee-like status. They receive a wage which is paid out of the workshop's production earnings. This remuneration consists of a basic sum and a performance premium. The national average wage at present amounts to about DM 250 monthly. As a rule, handicapped persons are insured for accidents, health, nursing and pensions, but are not usually included in unemployment insurance.

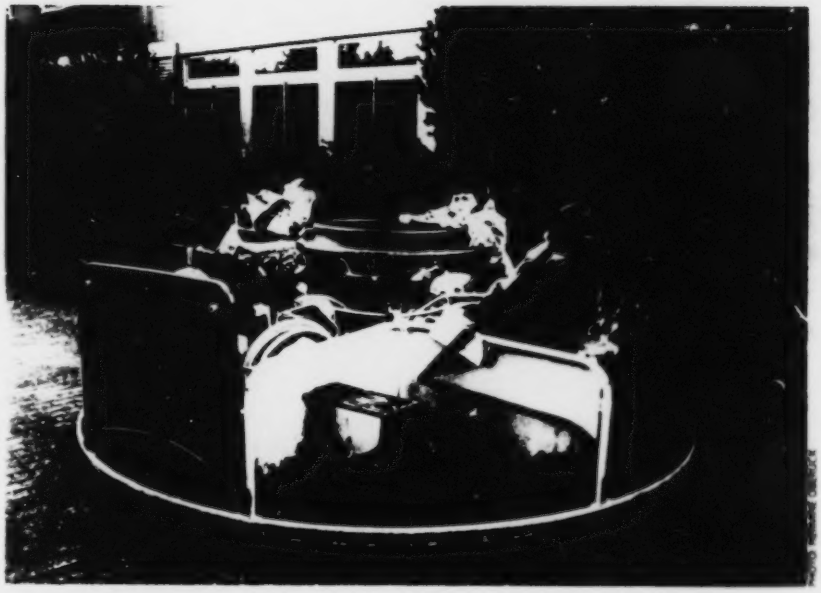
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Bodies responsible for remedial schools

Remedial schools are the responsibility of municipal or county authorities. There are also private sponsors. As a result, a distinction is made between public and private responsible bodies. Many types of remedial school are open all day. Remedial boarding schools have been set up for small groups of handicapped pupils (e.g. blind, deaf). These schools, in which hostel and school comprise one unit, are usually sponsored by the federal state authorities, provided they are not run by private bodies. Remedial boarding schools are weekly schools, i.e. the pupils travel early Monday morning to school and return home Friday afternoon to their families.

School costs

Attendance at public remedial schools is free of charge for children and their parents. The costs incurred for public transport, school buses or - if need be - taxis are paid for out of public funds. In those cases where children attend a remedial boarding school or a remedial school with hostel accommodation, the public purse assumes the costs for the running of the school (teaching and learning materials, building maintenance and administration, staff) and boarding costs. Parents or guardians must merely assume the proportion of costs they save at home. On average, parents pay DM 180 monthly for attendance at a boarding school. If the children are at a private remedial boarding school, the parents have to pay the costs of care and attention themselves initially. On the basis of the Federal Public Assistance Act, parents can apply to the social assistance office for partial assumption of these costs by the latter. Whatever the case may be, even in private schools, they have to accept the home saving element.



Westphalia School for the Physicaly Handicapped Pupils in wheelchairs enjoy themselves on specially designed equipment during break

Foreign pupils

Foreign pupils often have difficulties with the German school system. If they are handicapped and need remedial treatment they are admitted to special schools in the same way as German pupils if they cannot be given the necessary assistance at a normal school.

Much more than their German counterparts, the children of foreign workers experience commencement of compulsory school as a complete break with the life they have led hitherto. This is especially the case if these children have had little or no opportunity to get together with German children during the preschool period.

Foreign children often only get to know the structure of the host country through family filters. They grow up in a mixed family,culture in which neither the elements of their own country nor those of the host country are clearly represented. Parents, older siblings and the television increasingly introduce aspects of German values into the family home. The degree to which these foreign cultural values are allowed to penentrate family life, however, varies from family to family and depends how firmly the decision has been taken to return home, as well as the close ties to religious and cultural traditions.

The foreign pupil's identity, which has developed within the family environment, and which is particulary expressed in the allocation of roles the child has experienced, and the "horizon of values" it has been taught, is constantly called into question. Consequently, it is mainly problems of orientation together with language difficulties, which confront foreign children.

These represent "typical" stress factors for foreign children which may not only result in complete inability to learn, but also - or additionally - in incorrect social behaviour, or even in abnormal or malajusted behaviour.

In recent years, assistance for foreign pupils has been generally improved at primary schools. Putting pupils together in language or transitional classes has proved just as successful as has remedial teaching individually or in groups.

In this way, the number of foreign pupils at schools for the educationally subnormal dropped by 1.8 percent in the period 1986-1995 (proportion in 1986: 11.5%, in 1995: 9.7%). During the same period, the number of handicapped foreign pupils at the other types of remedial schools increased by 0.5 percent (proportion in 1986: 4.1%, in 1995: 4.6%).

It is generally acknowledged that remedial schools have achieved a high level of integration with regard to the assistance given to foreign pupils in the last few decades. These schools have always taken their commitment to likewise provide foreign pupils with remedial assistance in such a way that they can be transferred to normal schools at as early a stage as possible very seriously and have successfully accomplished this within the bounds of possibility.

Training remedial teachers

For many years, remedial teacher training was conceived as supplementary training for primary and main school teachers.

Even before World War II, this supplementary training for teachers of blind and deaf pupils lasted four semesters. Until well into the 1960s, the training for *Hilfsschullehrer* (remedial school teachers, as they were formally known) took place in the form of supplementary courses lasting 12 months for the most part.

It was only when a differentiation process divided remedial schools into ten different types in the mid-1960s that remedial teacher training was revised. First, the supplementary course of study for primary and main school teachers was generally increased to four semesters. As a next step, which represented a practical development in terms of school, all remedial teachers had to study two remedial subjects. This was of exceptional importance for school practice as the number of children with multiple handicaps needing remedial care was on the increase. If, for instance, mentally handicapped children also have to be taught at a school for the blind, it is expedient to have teachers available who have specialized in both these fields.

The development and expansion of the remedial school system in the 1960s and 1970s created an enormous demand for remedial teachers. As the demand for places in the supplementary course for remedial studies was not sufficient to cover requirements, further ways of training remedial school teachers were opened up.

Most of the *Lander* (federal states) introduced basic courses of study for remedial teachers. Without have to make a "detour" via teacher training for primary and main schools, interested *Abiturienten* (holders of a university entrance qualification) could now follow a eight-semester course of study in two remedial subjects, followed by the first state examination for a teaching post at a remedial school. During the subsequent practical training period, which lasted 18 or 24 months, there followed a more intensive introduction to school practice and preparation for the second state examination for a teaching post at a remedial school.

Not all the *Lander* have retained this basic course of study since the view was held in many places that remedial teachers should have a basic teaching qualification. This demand was intensified when, from the mid-1970s onwards, more and more handicapped children were being taught at normal schools. In line with the new demand for quality, remedial teachers who worked in these schools in an advisory and supportive capacity, were now expected to be in possession of a teaching qualification.

DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

The presssure on the education system in the Federal Republic of Germany to undertake reform cannot be overlooked. The enhancement of the independence of schools, the creation of educational profiles, the increased involvement of parents and the public, the question of the communalization of schools and the length of individual education courses stand to the fore. The concepts of "separation" and "integration" are also being debated.

At the same time, remedial schools expanded their education programmes by providing suitable handicapped pupils all the courses offered at normal schools. Out of this grew the necessity to deploy teachers at remedial schools who were in possession of teaching qualifications for secondary level. Consequently, apart from primary and main school teachers, intermediate and grammar/college preparatory teachers also had to undergo remedial training in supplementary courses.

As a result of this development, a highly differentiated and varied training system for remedial school teachers sprang up in the individual *Länder*. Whereas some *Länder* only provide a four-semester continuation course, others offer continuation and basic studies course side by side. Further *Länder* no longer offer supplementary courses at all, whilst yet others have created a combination of the two courses by permitting students following a course for a teaching post at a primary or main school level to transfer from this course after four semesters to a four-semester supplementary course in remedial education.

Since remedial teachers are not only needed in remedial schools, but also in normal schools, where the integration of handicapped children into non-handicapped classes is taking place, and their range of commitments extends just as much into the early remedial education sector as it does into the vocational training field of handicapped young persons, the demand for such teachers is considerable. Consequently, almost all the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany have substantially increased the capacities of their training institutions, particularly in teaching courses for the educationally subnormal, mentally handicapped, maladjusted pupils and those with speech disorders.

In addition to remedial teachers, subject teachers are also employed at schools for the mentally handicapped. They are child-care workers who have also completed a supplementary teaching course in a particular subject. Physio- and occupational therapists also acquire the necessary remedial qualification in this subject teacher training.

The model of joint instruction for handicapped and non-handicapped pupils is being offered as an alternative to the concept of independent remedial education.

Pilot schemes have been carried out in various *Bundeslander* (federal states) to provide this debate with a working basis. Regardless of the fact that these experiments were so lavishly endowed with staff and materials that their adoption in the normal school system was out of the question from the start, it is undeniable that it is possible for handicapped and non-handicapped pupils to be taught jointly to a much greater extent than at present. It is generally assumed that handicapped pupils can be taught with the same objective as their non-handicapped counterparts in joint classes at normal schools. Provided that education with a common objective - with a moderate measure of remedial assistance – can be coped with, integrative schooling can be assumed in these cases, too, in future.

Marked differences of opinion arise in those cases where the admission of handicapped children to normal schools is called for – but with different teaching objectives. The common features enjoyed by pupils who are taught by different persons according to different curricula in the same rooms is so limited that there can be no suggestion of integrative education.

The advantages of joint education in the early and elementary area remain unchallenged. Particularly in the case of children with sensory disorders, the opportunity of choice between a normal and a remedial school will increase. At secondary level, which is divided up into main school *(Hauptschule)*, intermediate school *(Realschule)* and grammar/college preparatory school *(Gymnasium)*, cooperative forms of education and pupil care will become more popular. This, of course, does not apply to the vocational education sector where a large measure of specialization and thus separate instruction and training of handicapped persons remain necessary. All forms of cooperation and integration demand greater availability of staff and materials which, from the present angle, is not likely to be forthcoming for the time being.

For the next few years, remedial education will concentrate on improving the possibilities of preventing learning and behavioural difficulties by means of more favourable framework conditions. Normal education institutions must be persuaded to raise their tolerance level vis-à-vis behaviour and learning abnormalities. This would enable children, who are restricted at present to remedial schools, to attend normal schools.

The degree to which the integration of handicapped persons into society is successful depends almost entirely on the degree to which they are integrated into the working and professional world.

Bruno Prandl

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

RESIGNATION IS OUT OF THE QUESTION

Rieke Körner is 19 years old and would like to be a cook. Cooking is her great love, her favourite dish is ratatouille with rice. But she will never learn the profession of cook - something she knows only too well.

Rieke is mentally handicapped. She has Down's syndrome, known formerly as mongolism. A "normal" apprenticeship is out of the question for her - but so is resignation. Rieke is sociable and inquisitive, and she knows what she wants. There's one thing she's certain of: "I'm not going into a workshop."

As long as she has lived, 19-year-old Rieke Körner, from Hamburg, has only known the mixed company of handicapped and non-handicapped persons. In the early 1980s, her parents fought for her to go to a "normal" school. Together with other parents in Hamburg, they founded the "Parents for Integration" association - a small group of 20 persons who championed the idea of joint living and learning for their children. Integrated classes were still something of a novelty, but the idea caught on. During her time at school, Rieke learned to be open and even take the offensive in her dealings with other people. Conversely, her non-handicapped schoolmates also benefited from the creation of an integrated class, both from a scholastic angle - integrated classes never have more than 20 pupils and have two teachers - and the human angle. Being together with Rieke and the other "handicapped" pupils became "normality", contact fears were overcome.

For a long time, Italy was the lone pioneer of the concept of integration. Italian remedial schools no longer exist. Germany is beginning to catch up, particularly in North Germany, where kindergartens and, above all, primary schools now have integrated classes as a general rule. In Hamburg alone, 44 primary schools and 16 secondary schools offer joint classes.

In Bremen, the Senate for Education has already translated into reality the school legislation of the Conference of Education Ministers, by which all schools, types and forms of schools and school levels are obliged - as far as possible - to educate children with or without handicaps jointly, and to ward off any forms of exclusion. The pilot project, "Integrated Classes", in which two primary schools and two secondary schools participated over a period of twelve years, came to an end in 1995 and was replaced bit by bit by the general provision of such classes throught the city state. This means that there are no longer any remedial schools for children with learning, speech or development handicaps in the primary school sector in Bremen. It should not be overlooked that this group accounts for almost 80 percent of all handicapped children. Spatially, schools for the mentally handicapped are also affiliated to normal schools. "School education for the rest" is to be avoided and the teaching of handicapped and non-handicapped pupils is to take place under one roof in future.

One problem is and remains that of finance since integration is expensive and money scarce. The champions of this idea are all agreed that any expansion of the integrative programme can only be achieved by diverting funds from the remedial to the normal school sector. This means that funds allocated so far to remedial schools must be reallocated to normal schools, provided children in need of remedial education attend the latter. "And even if funds are dwindling, goodwill and creativeness on the part of parents, teachers and the authorities can achieve a great deal," says Barbara Kleinert-Molitor, remedial education officer, drawing on personal experience. "We're still a long way off our goal. Integration must be continued, above all in secondary school classes." And then comes the next question. What happens on completion of school?

Rieke Körner and her parents were confronted by this question four years ago. At the time, Rieke was in the first group of school-leavers from an integrated class. This is where the Hamburg association of "Parents for Integration" stepped in. On their initiative, a special organization was set up - the "Hamburg Employment Assistance" (HAA) - a service devoted to the vocational integration of handicapped children. At the time, this institution was unique in the whole of Germany. Today there are about 100 such special facilities throughout the country. What has remained unique in Hamburg, however, is that fact that this employment assistance is devoted mainly to the integration of mentally handicapped persons in search of work. Two project leaders and ten staff have set themselves the goal of improving the vocational opportunities of persons who, because of their handicaps, are disadvantaged on the employment market. Their motto is: "Out of the workshops and into the firms". No easy undertaking in view of the already tense situation on the employment market where qualifications and flexibility are in increasing demand. Even non-handicapped school-leavers have difficulty in finding a training place and a steady job. The number of school-leavers is growing annually whilst the number of training places is decreasing.

Even the Federal Institute of Labour in Nuremberg is unable to say if this trend will continue in the next few years. Only one thing is sure: young handicapped persons and those with limited performance are particularly affected by this development. Out of the 116,000 "Rehabilitanden" (persons in need rehabilitation), as the job centres call educationally subnormal, mentally and physically handicapped school-leavers, it only proved possible to place 31,000 in an offically recognized apprenticeable trade. And, according to a forecast by the Institute of Labour Market and Vocation Research (IAB), the number of jobs for unskilled

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

young persons and those of limited performance will drop by half again by the year 2010.

Even so, mentally and physically handicapped persons are not threatened by unemployment. They are entitled to a place in a workshop for the disabled until they are sixty. According to the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, there are 590 of these institutions in Germany, employing almost 140,000 persons. These workshops for the disabled were set up in the 1960s by parents whose children had not obtained a place at kindergarten, school or in apprenticeable trade. But Rieke does not want to go into a protective institution of this nature where handicapped persons earn on average DM 240 pocket money a month. She would like to gain a place in society which is dominated for the most part by employment.

"Today, our society is dominated by the principle of 'payment according to performance'. Anything else is regarded as system-hostile and has been tabooed in the past," says Olaf Koglin, director of the job centre for the advocates of the Hamburg Employment Assistance. "Handicapped persons need social recognition through their job as much as the non-handicapped. We must help them achieve this." Integration into the "normal" working world is quite possible, says Koglin, but it is illusory to think that a handicapped person can earn his wage entirely on his own. "To ensure that a handicapped person has the chance of a job on the employment market, he must bring his wage with him. Otherwise no employer will enter upon an experiment of this nature."

The Hamburg Employment Assistance has realized this and operates according to the "supported employment" principle. If an employer has been found for a handicapped person, cooperation is supported practically and financially. The handicapped person is accompanied by his personal job-trainer from Employment Assistance who helps him with job-familiarization. The employer receives a wage subsidy. Anyone taking on an "unplaced person" receives a gross wage subsidy of 80 percent in the first year, 70 percent in the second and 60 percent in the third.

After the third year, however, the employer must pay the employee the full wage out of his own pocket. Many firms prefer to pay a monthly compensatory levy of DM 200 rather than comply with the statutory requirement of 6 percent handicapped persons on the payroll. If anyone, small and medium-size businesses with staffs of fewer than 15 persons - and therefore not obliged to pay the levy - are more likely to take on a handicapped person. Out of the 1,000 firms approached by the Hamburg Special Service, 80 responded positively. So far, 90 handicapped persons have been placed in firms. Over 400 are still waiting and hoping. The situation is roughly the same throughout the country. Only about 1,400 have been found a supported job and the waiting list is very long.

The director of the Hamburg job centre reckons that the principle of inplant integration is not only more humane, but also much more cost-effective on a mid- and long-term basis. "Expensive workshop places, which cost some DM 4,500 per handicapped person monthly, decrease in number and, following the initial cost-intensive stage in a firm, the costs diminish as the handicapped person becomes more and more self-reliant"

But the object is not to abolish the workshops. "Both schemes must remain on an equal footing," says Dieter Schafer at the Federal Institute of Labour in Nuremberg. "One cannot exchange one for the other."

At the moment, Rieke is completing a vocationally preparatory course - likewise integrative - at a Hamburg vocational school. She has familiarized herself for two years with various occupational fields and has had work experience in several firms. She is soon to embark on a year of practical training at a Hamburg hotel with the prospect of being taken onto the staff - within the framework of the Hamburg Employment Assistance. She found the place herself.

Sabine Tiller/Suddeutsche Zeitung

PHOTO: HEIDI RIECKE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

LIFE AS A BLIND STUDENT

Deep male, high male, high female? Depending on her mood, Gesa Wörmann can decide for herself which voice she gives to American author T.C. Boyle.

When she wants to carry on reading his novel *America*, the 28-year-old student opens the book and places the required page on her reader which stands on the desk in her Cologne apartment and looks like a small photocopier. She presses a button and the machine reads T.C.Boyle to her.

Unpractised persons would hardly understand the digitalized voice. Only when Gesa slows down the speed, does it become somewhat clearer. She is as familiar with her metallic reader as she is with the voice of her partner, parents and brothers and sisters. Gesa is blind - like some 155,000 others in Germany.

In order to realize her professional plans, she has to depend on special equipment for the blind. Gesa studied German language and literature, and history. She would like to be a journalist. In 1993, she moved much nearer her goal when West German Radio offered her a place - as the first blind student trainee - in the sound broadcasting department. The regional Rhineland authority provided the necessary additional computer equipment. This authority sponsors the professional integration of blind persons, of whom only every third of employable age has a job. In the meantime, Gesa has already written reports for the news department, produced a broadcast and assisted in the editorial department of a magazine. After her examination, she says, she will most likely be a presenter in sound broadcasting or write background material.

Gesa types her texts on a normal keyboard into the computer and checks what she has written on the braille attachment beneath the keyboard. Here the text is "transposed" into braille. This reproduces the letters by means of raised dots which blind persons can make out by touch. Gesa can also have the text on the screen read back to her by means of an audio-box. Once all the errors have been corrected, she prints her texts in standard type and submits them to the editorial department. Sometime soon she is going to write her master's thesis on this modified computer.

At home, Gesa does not have to depend on equipment since she lives with her friend, Reinhold, who is not blind and assumes all the chores which are difficult for her. This includes, first and foremost, shopping. "Just when I have learnt by heart what is on the shelves, they change everything around." The stands with special offers which are suddenly set up in the aisles present a problem, too. Cooking is Reinhold's province. "But I always clear up afterwards," says Gesa.

For blind persons who manage their households themselves, there are tactile markings in braille on cookers and spice pots. To be able to recognize various garments, a lot of blind persons sew different buttons onto their clothes. Special kitchen utensils, such as talking scales, facilitate housework. Gesa sticks labels in braille on her various medicaments to be able to identify them easily.

Having a non-blind person as a partner is regarded as a status symbol amongst blind people. "It is at least practical, if one of us can see." She only gets annoyed when someone says to Reinhold: "I think it's great that you can stand it" - as if the partnership is almost one of "monastic renunciation" for him.

Gesa is very glad that she gets help. There was a time when she was opposed to this and wanted to do everything herself. Now she realizes that accepting help is often more practical even though she continues to attach great value to her independence. If, when out, someone offers to accompany her because he is going her way anyway, she readily links arms. What does make her cross, however, is "if people simply drag me across the street without asking me first", and then she really does lose her bearings. She often encounters this sort of help before Christmas. Gesa likes people most of all who confess they are unsure of how to deal with blind persons. If reference is made to her handicap, she tries to react in a calm and relaxed manner and to answer inquisitive questions to dispel inhibitions. "But I can't be a teacher with a message every day". If, however, passers-by pat her on the head or say "poor creature", as if her blindness was also a mental handicap, she reacts testily.

There are no such problems with Reinhold. He warns her in good time of steps and other hindrances - something which others forget to do. Gesa has been on holiday to Switzerland with him and taken long mountain walks. They ride a tandem, watch television together, and go to the cinema, usually if the plot of the film depends on dialogue rather than pictorial action. Blind persons can hardly follow adventure films with magificent scenery. Gesa almost fell a sleep during *Out of Africa*. "Louis de Funes situation comedies mean nothing to me, but I was able to follow *The Killer* very well."

The pair's greatest hobby is "their club", *Schalke 04*, a football team. They witnessed all the UEFA Cup matches live, in the stadium. "I can really imbibe the

atmosphere," says Gesa. Her friend gives her a commentary on the game. Sometimes he says: "It's a pity, you didn't see that." Naturally, she is occasionally dissatisfied with herself and wishes she could see, particularly her friend, her parents and acquaintances. "But everybody has bad patches, and I don't concern myself with it all the time." She can only distinguish between dark and light. Blind from birth, she cannot imagine how people perceive things differently from her. Consequently, she fails to understand why most people regard blindness as a"great affliction" but think being deaf or dumb less dreadful.

From a very early age, Gesa learnt how to get along with non-blind persons - also through the two older siblings. After initial attendance of a normal kindergarten, she spent the next five years at a school for the blind in Soest. The next step was the move to Marburg where the only *Gymnasium* (grammar/college preparatory school) for blind pupils in Germany is located. Gesa's parents, however, noticed that she always withdrew from company. She was timid and increasingly inhibited in her association with non-blind persons. Together with the parents of other blind children, they championed a pilot scheme. A *Gymnasium* in Soest set up two classes, each of which included three blind pupils. Some of the books were in braille, much of the material had to be read aloud by the parents. Gesa used a computer to do her class tests. They were printed in normal type and then submitted to the teachers. Gesa only had great problems with geometry, since blind persons are unable to visualize things in three dimensions.

Gesa had her first jounalistic experience on the school magazine. She later worked for the *Soester Anzeiger* as the music critic. After acquiring her *Abitur* (university entrance entitlement), Gesa went straight to Bochum to study. "I simply had to find out what I could do on my own," she says. For several weeks, with the help of a mobility trainer, she acquainted herself with the various new routes in Bochum - to the railway station, to the university, to the nearest supermarket. In so doing, she oriented herself on permanent objects, such as telephone kiosks, letter boxes, buildings and kerbs. With her cane for the blind, she tapped her way along pavements to identify possible obstacles. But also to "hear buildings" which reflect a different sound.

The route is split up as much as possible into right angles. On the way to the city and suburban railway in Cologne-Muhlheim, which is located only a few hundred metres from her apartment, Gesa must first cross the road at traffic lights which are not fitted with an audible signal. But she knows when the lights turn green because the cars on the parallel road move off. Other route markers are some site fences and a hot-dog stall, which she recognizes by the smell of fat. Beyond this she has to turn right and cross a small square by joining the flow of persons making their

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

R&W 3/97 Page 27

way to the station. Now she tries to "hear" the station, counts the staircases until she reaches the seventh which she has to go up. By the time she reaches the platform, she has expended a great deal of energy. "I need my whole concentration," she says. If this relaxes, she is in danger of her losing her way.

When moving to Cologne, Gesa took a compact course: one week in Cologne, the way to the railway station, to West German Radio and then back home. "In the end, I was worn to a frazzle." Her trainer recorded on tape the things Gesa couldn't memorize for herself in so a short time. Gesa then took the tape along with her with her the next time. She only has difficulties with the Cologne trams and subways since the lines are not announced. Travelling in the evening is also problematic as the stations are often empty. If no-one else gets into the train, she can't find the door. Gesa describes the raised area around Cologne Cathedral as a "game of chance" for blind persons since there are no markers to guide her. "Once I'm up there, I don't know how to get down again." Since she has to be punctual at West German Radio, she has acquainted herself with an alternative route.

Christine Scharrenbroch/Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

Addresses

Bundesverband für Körper- und Mehrfachbehinderte e.V.
(Federal Association for Persons with Physical and Multiple Handicaps Inc.)
Brehmstraße 5 – 7
D-40239 Düsseldorf
Tel: +49/211/626651
Fax: +49/211/613972

Bundesvereinigung Lebenshilfe für geistig Behinderte e.V.
(Federal Association for Life Help for the Mentally Handicapped Inc.)
Postfach 70 11 63
D-35020 Marburg
Tel: +49/6421/491-0
Fax: +49/6421/491167

Bund zur Förderung Sehbehinderte e.V.
(Federation for Persons with Impaired Vision Inc.)
c/o Margaret Reinhardt
Max-Planck-Straße 24
D-40880 Ratingen
Tel: +49/2102/44437

Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Gehörlosen und Schwerhörigen e.V.
(German Society for the Deaf and Persons with Impaired Hearing Inc.)
Veit-Stoß-Straße 14
D-80687 Munchen
Tel: +49/89/588848
Fax: +49/89/5808379

Deutscher Blindenverband e.V.
(German Assocation for the Blind Inc.)
Bismarckallee 30
D-53173 Bonn
Tel: +49/228/955820
Fax: +49/228/357719

Fachverband für Behindertenpädagogik
(Association for the Education of the Handicapped)
Ohmstraße 7
D-97076 Würzburg
Tel: +49/931/24020
Fax: +49/931/24023

Lernen fördern - Bundesverband zur Förderung Lernbehinderter e.V.
(Promotion of Learning - Federal Association for the Educationally Subnormal Inc.)
Rolandstraße 61
D-50677 Köln
Tel: +49/221/380666
Fax: +49/221/385954

Impressum
Published by
Inter Nationes e.V.
Kennedyallee 91–103
D-53175 Bonn
E-Mail
bw@inter-nationes.de
Internet Address
http://www.inter-nationes.de
Editors
Ivan Tapia
Georg B. Blochmann
Layout
Graphicteam Köln
Production
Ilona Orthen
English Translation
Brangwyn Jones
Picture Research
Hella Roth
Printed by
Druckpartner Moser
Druck+Verlag
D-53359 Rheinbach
Editorial closing date:
30 July 1997

Inter Nationes in

BEST COPY AVAILABLE